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New York

President:	Mr. Ohin	(Togo)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Karev
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Indonesia, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Amina Megheirbi, representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/33, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wallström.

Ms. Wallström: On the morning of 30 September 2009, two dramatically different events took place. One — which Council members are all familiar with — was the adoption of resolution 1888 (2009) creating the mandate of a United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The other was a demonstration just outside the United Nations complex, condemning mass rape by security forces in the small West African nation of Guinea.

As the Council reached consensus on new measures to combat sexual violence, beyond the Chamber protesters decried yet more premeditated mass rape. As world public opinion applauded the commitments of this body, international headlines told of soldiers raping in broad daylight. Some Council members noted the connection between resolution 1888 (2009) and the use of rape to suppress a peaceful rally in Guinea-Conakry. They noted that when rape is part of the repertoire of conflict or political coercion, it is a form of collective violence that can threaten collective peace and security.

I would like to congratulate the Council on its groundbreaking consideration of that issue over the past three years, and to thank the presidency of Togo for convening today's debate. It is a chance to take stock of a fundamental question, namely, whether the gap between what is said in the Chamber and what happens in the world beyond has narrowed.

Last November, I went to Guinea to meet with the survivors. A young woman, who had been gang-raped and left for dead after joining the demonstration, recalled the chilling words of one soldier: "You wanted power — this is what you will get". What was striking to me was not how many women had been scarred by that atrocity, but how many have stood back up, organized and dared to tell their stories. Their demands for recognition, justice and the removal of perpetrators from positions of power are now reflected in a joint communiqué that the Government has signed with the United Nations.

Earlier this month, a Guinean panel of judges charged Lieutenant Colonel Moussa Tiegboro Camara for his alleged role in the atrocities. That is progress. It signals to the survivors that, while justice may have been delayed, it cannot be denied. In that respect, the report before the Council today (S/2012/33) is already partly out of date. It calls upon the Guinean authorities to take action against Camara. In the time between

issuing the report and today's debate, they have done so.

However, of course, conflict-related sexual violence is not specific to one country or continent. It is a global risk. The terror of unarmed women facing armed men is age-old and universal. The Security Council has led the way in recognizing that rape can acquire a strategic twist as a tactic of war. Today, there is broad recognition that the more brutal and shocking the crime, the more effectively it terrorizes communities into submission and lends notoriety to groups vying for power.

The terms of the debate have shifted from reacting to sexual violence, like any other tragedy, to preventing it, like any other threat. Instead of talking about women's wartime suffering year after year after year, protection mechanisms have been established. Instead of seeing the same few women in meeting after meeting, we are building a broad coalition.

The circle of stakeholders now extends to peacekeepers, peacemakers, war crimes prosecutors and the full range of protection actors. After all, it is at the moment of negotiating a peace deal, signing a ceasefire, training troops and sending peacekeepers on patrol that such resolutions have a real-world impact. In short, the Council has ushered in an ideological shift. When it takes notice, others do as well.

A decade ago, my mandate to be present in the Chamber, addressing this subject, would have seemed improbable. Yet the Council has kept pace with the changing dynamics of conflict. In contemporary wars, it has become more dangerous to be a woman fetching water or collecting firewood than to be a fighter on the front line. Wars have entered the marketplaces where women trade; they follow children en route to school; and haunt the prison cells where political activists are detained. Accordingly, the Council has embraced a view of security that includes the physical integrity and perspectives of women. During my visits to countries of concern, I have promised to bridge the voices of those women to the work of this body. At the political level, such visits can initiate a dialogue for civilian protection commitments.

My aim is to remain relevant to the Security Council and to ensure that the mandate adds value to its work. Resolution 1888 (2009) also created the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which is currently supporting initiatives of the Governments of Guinea, Liberia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to combat impunity. It is clear that, now more than ever, we have the tools to succeed.

One such tool is the report being debated today. It provides striking examples of sexual violence as a threat to security and an impediment to peacebuilding. No one can read that report and remain unmoved. But, as many participants have asked me, what does it mean to appear in the Secretary-General's report? I would like to address that head-on by highlighting three key implications.

First, the report, based on United Nations-verified information, is an instrument in the hands of political leaders to help them track and address sexual violence that is linked with insecurity. It cites illustrative incidents that point to larger patterns. As the new monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements mature, they will yield a deeper evidence base for action.

Secondly, it does not highlight only horror stories. Such reports are a place to feature the stories of actions that have made a difference, such as enforcing command responsibility and vetting perpetrators from the security forces. It is in the interests of every Government to ensure that the national uniform symbolizes professionalism, discipline and service, not rape, pillage and terror.

The third point is that it provides a baseline for systematic engagement with parties to armed conflict, with the consent and partnership of Governments. Such reports are vehicles for putting names to some of history's complex horrors. The acts of sexual torture and terror recorded here are not inevitable by-products of war, but crimes committed by combatants and their commanders. The fog of war does not absolve them of their responsibilities.

The report is also a historical record. This is critical, as the history of rape has been a history of denial. What explains the suppression of these stories? Perhaps the fact that it is the victim, not the attacker, who is often shamed and stigmatized, that society is more likely to pass judgement than to deliver justice. Perhaps it is because rape has been treated as a lesser evil in a context of lethal violence, or traded away by negotiating parties as the price of peace. Whatever the explanation, every speaker who adds his or her voice to

this debate is helping to end centuries of silence that have made rape an effective secret weapon.

From the Congo to Cambodia, from Bosnia to Liberia, these crimes have been neglected at the peace table and stricken from the public record. In Bosnia, I met with women who had survived the hell of rape camps in the early 1990s. Sixteen years later, I expected to talk about memorials and remembrance. I expected to talk about women's political power and economic recovery. But what we talked about was the rapes that these women are living and reliving every day, as if it were yesterday. The lack of redress and justice is staggering. An estimated 50,000 rapes have led to just 30 prosecutions. When Bosnia was on the Security Council, it recognized this painful reality and actively championed resolution 1960 (2010).

In Cambodia last year, women organized an informal hearing to spotlight sexual violence during the Khmer Rouge era, which has been left unaddressed by formal mechanisms. Collectively, they broke over thirty years of silence. I have urged the Governments of both Bosnia and Cambodia to deliver justice for these victims. In Rwanda, children born of rape are coming of age and trying to find their place in society.

So rape is not over when it is over. The point is to better understand conflict-related sexual violence and its consequences, to give rape a history in order to deny it a future.

At its heart, resolution 1960 (2010) is about prevention. It creates, for the first time, a workable system of deterrence and accountability in response to conflict-related sexual violence. This compliance regime includes a listing option as leverage.

In relation to other protection issues, such as ending the recruitment of child soldiers, the practice of listing has yielded tangible results. Expanding the naming and shaming list on children to those credibly suspected of patterns of sexual violence against adult women and men has made the approach comprehensive and the message to armed groups clear. The point is to cease all acts of rape, whether the victim is 8, 18 or 80.

I will never forget the story of an elderly woman I met in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, who told me that she had felt secure in the belief that she was too old to be raped, that she could be the soldier's grandmother. But that did not protect her.

While not a panacea, the list is an important tool. It reminds those who commit, command or condone sexual violence that they can no longer sleep easily at night under the cover of impunity and anonymity. The practice of listing shows that this is not just a war of words. Yes, preventive diplomacy is important. And yes, zero-tolerance policies matter. But ultimately, rape must carry consequences. Some have said this exercise is too optimistic, too ambitious. But surely we must bring all measures to bear in addressing this scourge.

The vision is to create conditions in which armed groups see sexual violence as a liability that will invite national and international scrutiny and censure unless concrete measures are taken. These measures are outlined in resolution 1960 (2010) as a basis for delisting. They include the issuance of orders through chains of command and the prohibition of sexual violence in codes of conduct, as well as timely investigation of alleged abuses to hold perpetrators accountable. A command structure with the capacity to sustain military operations and to punish deserters has the capacity to rein in acts of rape.

Those who tolerate sexual terror should be on notice that they do so in defiance of the Security Council, with its power to enact enforcement measures. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, for example, this means the militiamen who threatened to burn women alive if they resisted rape. They know why they appear in this list. The Council has signalled its intention to consider sexual violence when establishing or renewing sanctions regimes. Exemplary action has already been taken by the Sanctions Committee for the Democratic Republic of Congo with regard to Mai-Mai leader Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka. This sends a powerful message to others.

As a frame of reference, the term "conflict-related sexual violence" has been critical in channelling relevant information from the country level to the Security Council. This framing mirrors the resolutions by focusing on violence that has a nexus with peace and security, rather than on isolated incidents.

Isolated acts of rape occur in all societies, in times of war and of peace. These crimes need to be addressed by the national law-and-order machinery. However, when sexual violence is driven by the dynamics of conflict, is widespread or systematic, constitutes a grave breach of international

humanitarian law, or is used for military or political gain, it also warrants consideration by this body, in line with its competence under the Charter of the United Nations.

As a process of intimidation, targeted rape is often a precursor to conflict, as well as the last weapon to be relinquished in its wake. It is important not to exclude from consideration sexual violence that continues after the guns fall silent. Sexual violence that is normalized, owing to impunity, or committed by recently demobilized combatants is also a security issue that requires a security response.

Such violence subverts efforts to cement the peace. We know that a ceasefire does not mean peace for women if the shooting ceases but the rapes continue unchecked. Such violence should be included in the definition of a ceasefire and in the monitoring provisions. Monitoring teams must be gender balanced, not gender blind. But to date, just three ceasefire agreements have included sexual violence. The new guidance for mediators on addressing conflict-related sexual violence, developed by Department of Political Affairs, will fill an analytical and practical gap.

Modern history attests that post-war rarely means post-rape. In Liberia, I have seen how sexual violence during the civil war left a profound imprint on society. Addressing that legacy is not just a moral, but an operational, imperative. It is a credibility test for the nascent military and police forces. To echo what has been said so often within these walls, impunity fuels the vicious cycle of violence. Peace is not only the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice.

Nor can we overlook the use or threat of sexual violence as a tool of political repression and civil strife. That would negate the promise of prevention. Politically motivated rape is a disturbing trend witnessed in the wake of contested elections in places such as Kenya, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. It has also been part of political violence in Libya, Syria and Egypt.

In relation to Syria, the Secretary-General has expressed concern about the sexual abuse of men in detention as a method of extracting intelligence. In Libya, United Nations information indicates a pattern of women being abducted from their homes, cars and streets and subjected to repeated rape during the conflict. Yet survivors are coming forward only in cases of urgent medical need. In the words of one Libyan victim, "If the bleeding had stopped, I would never have reported it."

This underscores that we cannot wait for hard data to surface before taking action. The relationship between incidents and reports of wartime rape is like the relationship between the tip of an iceberg and its mass. Only the extremity is visible. I trust that the Council's forthcoming resolution on Libya will explicitly mention the need to address sexual violence. A critical test of the National Transitional Council will be its willingness to investigate violations by both sides in the conflict and to ensure comprehensive services for survivors.

Due to the blame, shame and stigma, most survivors still have more to lose than to gain from reporting rape. Improved data collection is therefore inextricably linked to improved assistance. Our primary focus must always be needs, rather than numbers. Data is not an end in itself, but an evidence base for action.

And we must deliver as one. I am proud to Chair the inter-agency network United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. United Nations Action has provided strategic support at the country level and catalyzed joint initiatives in close partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN-Women, such as scenario-based training for peacekeepers.

But in terms of response, for too long we have been too late. The United Nations system is working to become better attuned to the red flags and early warning signs. Rape is not a fact of human history, like disease or drought; it is often planned and therefore predictable. United Nations Action has scanned past conflicts to compile the United Nations Matrix of Early-Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence to equip monitors to identify and prevent spikes.

This analysis also sheds light on the roots of wartime rape. For instance, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons enable these atrocities. As many women have told me: "That man had the gun and he had the power". Sexual violence is often perpetuated by incomplete disarmament and the absence of vetting, training and security sector reform. For example, in Somalia, a practice has recently been detected of national security forces renting out their uniforms to civilians by night, which facilitates rape. Such patterns

must be met with disciplinary measures. We also know that militarized mining can fuel human rights violations by enriching armed groups, for instance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council has understood that there can be no security without women's security. The aim is not only to protect women from violence; it is to protect them to participate in public and economic life. Rape has a chilling effect on women's political participation, casting a long shadow of trauma and terror. It can inhibit their access to polling booths and public squares. We must send a message that women's lives, votes and voices count and will be counted.

Certainly, the women I have met cannot be caricatured as passive victims. They have fought daily wars — not for medals and monuments, but battles for bread, to feed their children and to make their presence felt. I am particularly concerned, at this historical juncture, that unless women can shape their own political and personal destiny, the Arab Spring will turn into a winter for Arab women.

While sexual violence disproportionately affects women and girls, men and boys also number among the direct and indirect victims. We need to ensure that our interventions are gender-responsive and community-based.

In the wake of war, the aim is not just to build back, but to build back better. That means addressing pre-existing injustice and inequality. What we have already achieved gives us hope. The action of this Council tells survivors that their lives matter. It also tells perpetrators — and potential perpetrators — that war does not give license to rape. The world is watching.

I would like to conclude by taking a step back from the technical and operational details that often consume us, to simply recall that the Council has changed the way we think about rape. From the 1907 Hague Convention, which gave wartime rape a glancing reference as a crime against family honour, sexual violence is now seen as a self-standing threat to security. This has validated the experience of survivors. And in the end, that kind of transformation is what this work is all about.

I thank members for listening, and I look forward to the debate.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Wallström for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Government of Togo for convening this important debate today. It provides me with an opportunity to inform members of the Security Council of our joint efforts and the challenges that we encounter as we implement this extremely significant mandate.

The mandate related to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict is one of the most demanding in peacekeeping. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) remain deeply concerned that, despite universal and repeated condemnation, sexual violence continues to be used as a tactic of war, in particular against women and children.

We greatly appreciate the political advocacy and leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Wallström, in heading the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. During the past year, collaboration between my Department, Special Representative Wallström, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations Action has been strengthened. Thanks to these partnerships, we are continuing to produce concrete results.

Since last year's debate, we have worked with the Office of Ms. Wallström and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights to develop terms of reference for women's protection advisers. A tripartite approach has been adopted in the context of the advisers by placing them in gender and human rights organizations and in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the relevant peacekeeping operations to facilitate cooperation. This approach maximizes existing capacities in the field and avoids fragmentation and duplication of responsibilities.

Several peacekeeping operations were selected and invited to identify women's protection advisers within the limits of existing resources. However, in cases of conflict-related sexual violence on a major scale, additional resources should be made available to deal with the high volume of work. Our efforts to

identify and deploy advisers are currently focused on United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

In 2011, the Office of Special Representative Wallström and United Nations Action developed guidelines on the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements. The human rights structures in our peacekeeping operations direct monitoring and verification, in close collaboration with other mission components and the members of the United Nations country team.

While the arrangements are not an end in themselves, they should contribute towards a better prevention and programming policy response. There remain challenges that we are trying to address: mobilizing capacities to implement the arrangements; ensuring the presence of uniformed women in affected areas to reach out to women and girls; and addressing inadequate infrastructure and communications to gain access to important regions to monitor and verify incidents. Ultimately, impunity, scarce services in rural areas and insecurity deter survivors from reporting the sexual violence to which they have been subjected.

The DPKO and the Department of Field Support stand ready to provide the necessary support to encourage Governments to institutionalize the prohibition and prevention of and accountability for conflict-related sexual violence through the development of policies and national security sector training. We must recognize the close links between time-bound commitments and security sector development. Meticulous and systematic assessments of armed groups must be part of any integration policy in national forces.

We are proud to be an active member of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1888 (2009). Accountability for sexual violence must be established to combat sexual discrimination and inequality. The reform of existing legislation, access to a functional justice system and witness protection programmes are fundamental.

Political will is also essential to ensure that perpetrators of international human rights and humanitarian law violations, including sexual violence, are tried and held accountable. The rule of law as a whole must prevail, by means of security and judicial sectors, including correctional systems.

In that regard, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has worked with civil society and women in particular to ensure that the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur included provisions for the Government of the Sudan to take the steps necessary to deliver effective and timely justice for serious human rights violations, including sexual violence, and to prevent amnesty in cases of crimes of sexual violence.

(*spoke in English*)

Progress has also been made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where MONUSCO supports civilian and military prosecutors in investigating allegations of conflict-related sexual violence. In 2010 and 2011, MONUSCO undertook more than 30 joint investigation team missions with magistrates and police officers to investigate cases of sexual violence. MONUSCO also supported the holding of trials, so as to strengthen the military justice system, including through mobile court proceedings in remote areas. As a result, 217 judgments on sexual violence were delivered in 2011. MONUSCO and partners also support 39 legal centres, which provide free legal assistance to survivors of sexual violence and to their families. In 2011 more than 2,200 survivors received assistance.

May I add that when I was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a month ago I visited an incredible place in Goma named Heal Africa. It is a hospital primarily devoted to treating victims of rape, physically and psychologically, as well as to teaching them trades for them to live on after they leave the facility. It is through just that type of clinic that we can have a positive impact on the lives of unfortunate victims. We should encourage such projects.

Capacity-building is an important element of the sexual violence mandate, which we are carrying out in support of host Governments and within our missions. For example, in Timor-Leste, Liberia, Haiti and Darfur, United Nations police work in support of the national police to develop dedicated spaces to receive survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. For example, three such spaces are being launched this month in at-risk camps in Haiti. To that end, the Police Division is working with police-contributing countries to develop

training and trainer modules to standardize the prevention and investigation of sexual and gender-based violence in post-conflict environments, for United Nations police and national police forces. In the course of last year, 103 police trainers were certified through five regional training courses.

To capacitate our military components, we have developed training modules, in consultation with Member States, to accompany the military gender guidelines. We are piloting them regionally. We have also introduced a module on conflict-related sexual violence, developed under the auspices of UN Action into the DPKO/DFS protection of civilians training modules for military, police and civilian components. Those modules were recently finalized and disseminated to our missions and key peacekeeping training partners.

Ultimately, protection from sexual violence is a key element of the protection of civilians mandate of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Given the diverse environments in which peacekeeping missions operate, different protection arrangements have emerged. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, joint protection teams and community liaison assistants have become essential elements of MONUSCO's efforts to address the protection of civilians. Community alert networks established through the use of cellular phones and high-frequency radio networks are currently being piloted.

Another example is Darfur, where UNAMID and the United Nations country team regularly conduct joint assessment field missions in selected camps for internally displaced persons, to identify security and humanitarian concerns, such as access to basic services, the human rights situation, patterns of population movement and communities' coping mechanisms. The missions verify reported cases of sexual violence, and therefore they also address the problem of conflicting information.

In order to capture good practices and lessons learned, we are conducting an inventory of our structures and practices, which can be replicated in other contexts. Furthermore, the United Nations Action early warning indicators matrix on conflict-related sexual violence, to which the Special Representative referred, will be adapted to the operational environments of two peacekeeping operations and piloted and introduced into the protection arrangements of other peacekeeping operations later this year.

It is important to underscore that the host Government is ultimately responsible for the protection of its civilian population. Missions cannot act as a surrogate for State authority. Where mandated, therefore, we must strengthen frail State institutions, to facilitate their protection response. In that regard, we welcome the recent adoption of the Secretary-General's human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, which ultimately strengthens the protection abilities of the host Government's forces.

MONUSCO is implementing that policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which makes the Mission's support to the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the Police nationale civile (PNC) conditional on their respect of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. The policy seeks to improve FARDC behaviour through screening the chain of command of its units for past humanitarian law and human rights violations, including acts of sexual violence, before support is provided by the Mission. Indeed, in the course of last year, MONUSCO screened more than 2,000 FARDC and PNC personnel. Support was suspended to two FARDC battalions based on evidence of human rights violations. I am pleased to highlight that collaboration and progress has been achieved with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Last month I also had another meeting with a senior general commanding FARDC forces in North Kivu, who acknowledged that our due diligence policy had now been fully understood and taken on by himself and his troops: they respect and take full account of our requirements in the matter.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to a few key points. In countries where conflict-related sexual violence is taking place, we call on Member States to fund women advisers in order to strengthen the implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements and the sexual violence mandate from a peace and security perspective. Time-bound commitments are part of security sector reform and a strong tool for preventing sexual violence from taking place. Our missions stand ready to support host Governments to address those commitments, to work with the security sector to address the integration of armed groups in national security forces and to work in

close support of national military and civilian justice systems to ensure accountability for incidents of sexual violence. DPKO and DFS also look forward to close collaboration with host Governments to implement the Secretary-General's human rights due diligence policy.

Uniformed women in peacekeeping are key to addressing conflict-related sexual violence. DPKO and DFS call on troop- and police-contributing countries to commit to that issue and to increase the number of women represented in national security forces. We have set the objective of 20 per cent women in the United Nations police forces by 2014, but we must go further.

Finally, I would like to underline that political, social and economic empowerment of women in fragile States is fundamental to eradicating discrimination, inequality and sexual and gender-based violence. Women's exclusion from the sectors responsible for their disempowerment must be addressed through adopting the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) and mobilizing strong political will. Political will is what it is really about.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his presentation, which sheds light on this tragic reality that we must eliminate at all cost.

I now give the floor to Ms. Megheirbi.

Ms. Megheirbi (NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security): I am speaking on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, a civil society coalition that advocates for the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain peace and security. That work includes the promotion of women's human rights and combating sexual violence. I am also here in my capacity as president of the Attawasul Association, a Libyan non-governmental organization in Benghazi working on women's empowerment. I have lived through the violence imposed on the Libyan people by a brutal dictator for 42 years. That includes the intensified aggression after the 17 February revolution, in which sexual violence was used as a weapon of war.

We appreciate the ongoing work of numerous actors to combat violence against women. That includes the efforts of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We welcome the analysis and recommendations contained in the latest Secretary-General's Report (S/2012/33) on conflict-related sexual violence. As the report makes clear, sexual violence is often used as a weapon to torture, terrorize and threaten peace. It is important to remember that each paragraph of the report represents human beings — women, men, children and communities affected by that threat to peace and security. That includes individuals from my community who, like most victims, have not received and likely will not receive proper services, protection, acknowledgement, justice or accountability. This represents a collective failure of the international community to effectively respond to the threat.

Addressing conflict-related sexual violence requires powerful and urgent leadership at the international, regional and local levels. That leadership is essential across the United Nations system and from every Member State. Today, I will address three key areas in which leadership is essential: prioritizing prevention, ensuring a survivor-centric approach, and strengthening justice and accountability.

First and foremost, the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence is paramount and must be the Council's priority on this issue. The Security Council itself has underlined the importance of prevention. After the mass rapes in Walikale, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 2010, the Council stated that all possible steps should be taken to prevent such outrages in the future. Given the political, technical and financial resources required, can we say that all possible steps have been taken to prevent conflict-related sexual violence? Can we say that to women, girls and their communities in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, or to the survivors in my country, Libya? Can we say that to the rest of the world? Have Member States and the United Nations invested all available political, technical and financial resources to prevent further atrocities? If not, why not?

We urge all actors to address the root causes of sexual violence. Those root causes include gender inequality, political exclusion, social and cultural stigma, militarization and the proliferation of arms. Women's human rights and full participation cannot be ignored. In fact, women's full and equal participation is fundamental to addressing those root causes, and therefore to preventing sexual violence in conflicts.

Secondly, when prevention efforts fail, survivors must be the priority of all service provision and

protection. The survivor-centric approach must encompass the provision of medical, psychological, legal and other services to survivors, as well as effective avenues for reparations and redress. We support the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report in that regard, and we strongly call on all actors to make that a reality. Service and protection strategies must be designed in full consultation with women and affected communities. Particular attention must be paid to the rights and concerns of women and girls, who are often at increased risk in displacement settings, as the current report notes in many cases, including Somalia, Darfur in the Sudan, and Sri Lanka.

Thirdly, survivors demand nothing less than justice and an end to impunity. Accountability for crimes of sexual violence must be included at every stage, from ceasefire agreements to all aspects of post-conflict reconstruction. That is central both to preventing future crimes of sexual violence against women and to the healing of societies. At both the national and international levels, security sectors and judicial systems must address the culture of impunity for these crimes. Measures must include improved vetting of reintegrated soldiers and bringing suspected perpetrators to justice, in domestic courts where possible or through referral of situations to the International Criminal Court and other international courts for prosecution. Where those systems are failing survivors, comprehensive reforms should be mandatory. Maintaining the full dignity of survivors must be at the core of all of these processes.

As a Libyan, I want to emphasize the need to hold accountable all parties involved in any act of sexual violence, and to prosecute them accordingly. That includes politicians and military commanders who order or permit such acts as a weapon of war, as well as those who commit the crime.

I would like to state our concern regarding all situations where women's rights continue to be violated. On conflict-related sexual violence specifically, we note that the Secretary-General's current report does not reference a number of relevant situations where sexual violence has been perpetrated. Those include Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories and Haiti, among others. We urge the Secretary-General to take all measures to ensure that all relevant countries are included in future reports. Furthermore, we condemn the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse, which are all too often committed with impunity.

In civil society, we are often at the forefront of combating sexual violence from the grassroots to the international level. We encourage all actors to support civil society at all levels in all areas of that work. Furthermore, in their own work in the Security Council or in the United Nations, members should ensure that they are working to fulfil the obligations of resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010). That includes ensuring that all country reports and mandate renewals are truly responsive to the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

In conclusion, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and on my own behalf as a Libyan woman, I would like to ask you, Mr. President, your colleagues on the Security Council and all other members of the international community to take the urgent action on conflict-related sexual violence that we have outlined here today, namely, prioritizing prevention, ensuring a survivor-centric approach and strengthening justice and accountability efforts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Megheirbi for her heartfelt statement.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your presence here today and for organizing this open debate. I would also like to thank Special Representative Wallström and Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for their comprehensive briefings. Of course, I would like to thank Ms. Megheirbi for her remarks this morning and for all of her and the Working Group's efforts to advance the women, peace and security agenda.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2012/33) on conflict-related sexual violence demonstrates the importance of having a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In just the past year, she was able, together with the Team of Experts, to assemble the evidence available in the report, and to begin to address some of the horrors it describes. From the beginning, the United States has supported the Special Representative and the Team of Experts, both

in advocating their mandates and financing their work. It is time and money well spent.

The Special Representative has, first of all, gathered facts. We now know how rape was used to humiliate and punish during the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. We know now that 625 cases of sexual violence by warring parties were recorded by the United Nations from December 2010 to November 2011 in the North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have before us figures, dates, names of perpetrators and perpetrating forces in those countries, as well as in Burma, Somalia, the Sudan and South Sudan. We also now have information, sometimes very extensive information, about sexual violence perpetrated in post-conflict situations and situations of civil unrest, in the Central African Republic, Syria, Guinea, Nepal and elsewhere.

The Special Representative and the Team of Experts have demonstrated the extent of the problem. Their work is also increasing awareness of the issue and encouraging best practices. In the reporting period, more than 150 people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from various types of security forces, were sentenced after trial to punishment for crimes of sexual violence. A total of 9,534 Congolese survivors of sexual violence in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces, including at least 1,700 children, received medical and psychosocial support. Congolese officers in two conflict-affected provinces are now receiving training from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), to train their own soldiers on how to prevent sexual violence and deal properly with witnesses and victims. Those training modules will become the national standard for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Special Representative received a commitment from the President of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that reparations for victims of sexual violence would be part of the Commission's mandate. In Liberia and South Sudan, the Team of Experts has worked with national justice sectors on sentencing guidelines, the training of police, constitution-drafting and a host of other initiatives.

That is what the Office of the Special Representative is for. The Security Council's mandate is clear and the Special Representative has been forthright in carrying it out. She deserves our strong support.

The problem, unfortunately, remains vast. We have only begun. Impunity is still alarmingly common. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sheka Ntabo Ntaberi ran as a candidate for office even as a warrant was out for his arrest for sexual violence. In Guinea, as detailed in the Secretary-General's report, two men connected to the violence of September 2009, which included sexual violence, have since been given high Government positions. Such impunity should not be tolerated.

Apart from keeping a sharp focus on ending impunity, we need to build our institutional capacity for early warning. We applaud the efforts of the Special Representative, of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, and of UN-Women to develop an early warning framework.

As Council members, we need to make combating sexual violence part of our discussions with briefers so that it becomes an integral part of our practice. We have recognized for some time that conflict-related sexual violence is a security issue, but the Secretary-General's report places that matter beyond dispute. As is shown quite clearly, it is a security matter that impacts entire countries, as well as individual communities, families and individuals.

It is also one that very much affects men and boys, as well as women and girls. The report shows that in many places, men are forced to watch as their wives and daughters are being abused. There are numerous cases of men and boys being sexually attacked by other men as a deliberate tactic of conflict. This is a security issue, not a women's issue. We must treat it as such and develop the same strategies of early warning and prevention that we use for other security threats.

The United States welcomes and supports the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, particularly with regard to the need for all parties to conflict to make specific and time-bound commitments to cease acts of sexual violence and bring perpetrators to justice. We particularly endorse the recommendation to address conflict-related sexual violence in the context of security-sector reform initiatives, including personnel-training and civilian oversight mechanisms. The Council should continue to consider conflict-related sexual violence in authorizing and renewing the

mandates of peacekeeping missions, including with regard to monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements.

The United States will stay engaged with this issue. As part of our new, National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the United States is working to strengthen our efforts to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual violence as we advance women's participation in preventing conflict and keeping peace. Our ultimate objective is to incorporate women and girls into our diplomatic, security, humanitarian and development efforts in conflict-affected countries, not simply as beneficiaries but as agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth and stability.

For example, the United States believes that it is crucial to increase women's participation in security forces involved in preventing conflict and building peace as one way to reduce conflict-related sexual violence. The United States funds and implements the Global Peace Operations Initiative, which has facilitated the training of 2,451 female peacekeepers worldwide. The Initiative supports instruction on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Beginning last year, we have supported the predeployment training of Peruvian women peacekeepers focused on women, peace and security issues, in support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. In Afghanistan, United States and Afghan officers provide instruction and mentoring to female soldiers in the Afghan National Army. In 2014, 10 per cent of the Afghan Military Academy's class will be women. There are already more than 1,200 women serving in the Afghan National Police, many of whom serve in leadership positions.

Preventing and combating conflict-related sexual violence is central to building lasting peace and brighter futures for countries undergoing and emerging from conflict. I cannot stress enough what a critical concern this is for my Government. Sexual violence must cease to be used as a tactic of war and intimidation. For the sake of the vulnerable and for the honour of nations, we, as the Council, must continue to support efforts to end this scourge.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Margot Wallström, for her comprehensive and valuable briefing and for the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33). We welcome the efforts of the Special Representative and share the principles and objectives she outlined. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Ladsous, and the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Megheirbi. We think the deliberations today will promote our common interest in the subject.

India has been actively participating in the Council's debates on the agenda item on women and peace and security. It is a cross-cutting issue with a multisectoral dimension and requires the active participation of all Member States. I would therefore like to thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Togo for organizing this open debate, which affords Member States an opportunity to discuss the progress made in the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) and contributes to our ongoing consideration of the subject.

It is estimated that today close to 90 per cent of current casualties in wars and situations of armed conflict are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children. Obviously, women bear a disproportionately large share of the burden of conflict, but they have only a marginal say in matters of war and peace. That is perhaps a function of the gender imbalance in our societies, which is reflected in positions of power and influence.

Despite that, women should not be viewed solely as victims of war. They also have to assume the key role of ensuring family livelihoods in the midst of chaos and destruction. They are particularly active in peace movements at the grass-roots level and in cultivating peace within their communities. Therefore, the absence of women at the peace-negotiating table is unconscionable. Some of the aspects highlighted by the landmark Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) — in particular the greater participation of women in areas of conflict prevention, peace negotiation and post-conflict reconstruction — are central to the issue.

Some solutions need to emerge from the conflict-affected societies themselves. Others are more long-term and structural, involving, inter alia, the encouragement of democratic ideals and practices, effective improvements in economic and social conditions and

expansion of opportunities for education and productive employment.

Situations of conflict vary. Each has its own causes and consequences. Clearly, there can be no off-the-shelf remedies or panaceas. We need to take practical and effective steps to mitigate the impact of conflict on women and to enhance their ability to restore and preserve peace.

It is a matter of deep regret that the international community must repeatedly debate the issue of sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict. That abhorrent behaviour, whether perpetrated by the parties to the armed conflict or by others, must be unequivocally, unambiguously and resolutely condemned. There should be no tolerance for gender-based violence. All such cases must be investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted.

Some argue that human rights law and international humanitarian law do not offer enough protection to women and children. Such postulation is a bit extreme. Women's rights and needs have received the attention they deserve in the codification of international law. The challenge is the effective implementation of the laws and the availability of adequate resources for capacity-building wherever required. That alone will ensure the real impact of our efforts on the ground.

By definition, it is States that are parties to the treaty-based system of international law. By and large, they respect them, and when they do not, penalties arise under provisions of the relevant treaties. However, the most egregious crimes against women in times of conflict have been and are being committed by non-State actors, often warring against Governments. They obey no laws and, as experience has shown throughout the past decade, are immune to coercive or punitive measures. The Council therefore needs to consider, in practical terms, how non-State actors, who are responsible for the bulk of the crimes that continue to be committed against women, can be effectively tackled.

On the part of the United Nations, there has been modest progress in areas such as gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations and training of peacekeeping personnel on gender perspectives. In that context, we commend Special Representative Wallström for having brought a new synergy in addressing the issue of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict.

My country has taken a lead in that process, while conscious of the need to incorporate essential elements of the gender-mainstreaming policy in the predeployment training of its peacekeepers. India's formed police unit (FPU) of 100 personnel in Liberia was the first of its kind among United Nations peacekeeping operations. As the largest troop-contributing country in United Nations history, we are very proud of the exemplary record of our peacekeepers. I might add that we are willing to increase our contribution of female FPUs.

The Secretary-General, in his report, referred to efforts to establish a framework of early warning indicators specific to conflict-related sexual violence. The United Nations has also developed a set of indicators as global markers of progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We have taken note of those efforts. The development of such indicators, benchmarks and guidelines should involve a process of broad intergovernmental scrutiny and approval before their eventual adoption. In that connection, one must be cognizant of the difficulty in obtaining credible and verifiable data from conflict situations.

India will continue to contribute positively to United Nations efforts in protecting vulnerable sectors of the population, particularly women and children, in conflict and post-conflict societies. I would also like to emphasize that the international community needs to enhance cooperation by providing new and additional financial resources, sharing experiences and building capacity in the areas of justice and the rule of law.

The women and children in our lives ensure our future. They must live in security. While there is much talk of the need to safeguard the interests of women and children, there is less talk of cooperative efforts to ensure sustained economic growth, which alone can eradicate the poverty and deprivation that cause their exclusion.

Several studies point out that most of the global poor are women. Globalization has affected both men and women, but women bear the double burden of inequality and marginalization. Empowering them is therefore both crucial and urgent. In considering the role of women in peace and security, the Council, I am certain, will bear in mind the wider perspective of women's empowerment, development and peace.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing the debate.

My delegation welcomes the report (S/2012/33) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) on conflict-related sexual violence. I also take the opportunity to thank Ms. Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for her constructive and substantive briefing and to pay tribute to her efforts to promote the protection of women against violence in conflict situations. Our thanks also go to Mr. Hervé Ladsous and to Ms. Amina Megheirbi on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. I wish to congratulate the NGO Working Group in particular for its commendable work in raising awareness with respect to members of the Council.

Our debate today gives us the opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the commitments made under resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), as well as the progress achieved in the implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements established in line with resolution 1960 (2010).

The convening of this debate also allows us to undertake a more in-depth reflection on the psychological impact and the consequences of conflict-related sexual violence against women, girls and children, as well as on the need to identify with greater determination ways and means of ensuring optimal protection for the victims of such violence.

The suffering endured by women during conflict and the various forms of exclusion and social injustice that they suffer from within their communities and families require more resolute joint action and a stronger commitment to ensure that they benefit from the maximum level of protection.

The adoption of resolution 1960 (2010) in December 2010 was one element of a series of initiatives aimed at bolstering the existing legal toolkit for tackling conflict-related sexual violence. We believe that the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements established under that resolution should allow for the collection of objective, reliable and credible data on acts of sexual violence. We would also like to see these arrangements serve as a basis for comprehensive strategies to counter sexual violence by strengthening preventive measures, improving medical and psychological support services, and ensuring access to justice for victims.

My delegation would also like to commend the efforts made by the Council to combat sexual violence, in particular with respect to the preparation of the terms of reference for women's protection advisers, in cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The report of the Secretary-General also takes stock of situations of sexual violence in several regions of the world and of the measures taken by the parties in conflict to put an end to those acts by identifying those responsible, combating impunity of the perpetrators and masterminds, and making available medical, psychological and social assistance for victims and their families.

While it is the responsibility of the parties to a conflict to put an end to the grave consequences of sexual violence during conflict for women and girls, coordinated and sustained action by the United Nations, through its various organs, agencies and specialized and programmes, is crucial to progress in existing initiatives.

The Kingdom of Morocco is convinced that the effective implementation of Security Council resolutions on conflict-related sexual violence also requires improved coordination among the various national and international actors involved in the combat against sexual violence, as well as a more resolute and sustained commitment on the part of the United Nations in the area of technical assistance and capacity-building.

The international community must stand shoulder to shoulder and act in a spirit of solidarity in guaranteeing women who have fallen victim to sexual violence the right to make their voices heard and to express their suffering, bearing in mind our obligation to listen to them, protect them and to ensure that such crimes never again go unpunished.

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's meeting. We are grateful also

to Ms. Wallström, Mr. Ladsous and Ms. Megheirbi for the useful information they presented today.

The very nature of violence during armed conflict requires that due attention be paid to all of its manifestations. The issue of women, peace and security should be addressed through a comprehensive approach, as set out in resolution 1325 (2000). Sexual violence is a particular manifestation of violence that clearly requires firm condemnation and severe punishment. The careful investigation of all incidents and the punishment of perpetrators is a guarantee of success in combating this egregious crime.

Of particular concern are situations where sexual violence is widespread. However, sexual violence is far from being a root cause of an outbreak of conflict; it is, rather, a symptom of the impunity that prevails during armed conflict. Some of those situations, as we know, pose a threat to international peace and security, and it follows that they require the intervention of the Security Council. But attempts to artificially impose on the Security Council the duty to address the issue of sexual violence in all of its aspects will lead not only to imbalances in system-wide coherence but to an erosion of the legitimacy and importance of Council decisions on grave, complex and urgent issues.

Let us not forget that the issue of countering sexual violence is, in the framework of existing mandates, taken up not only by the Council but also by other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women.

We would like to recall once again that sexual violence is but one of the crimes committed in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. We are convinced that focusing our efforts on combating sexual violence means that we must also pay due attention to other crimes committed in time of conflict. Civilians continue to be the victims of crimes such as premeditated attacks, including terrorist attacks, as well as the indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force. In our view, the Council must evaluate such cases in an impartial and principled manner and ensure that the perpetrators do not go unpunished.

We have carefully studied the report (S/2012/33) of the Secretary-General. We note that the document is rich in factual data, which reflects the credible and comprehensive work being done to combat sexual violence in armed conflict. Much of what has been done is welcome. We can see clearly that progress has been made as a result of the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, the reliability of some of the accounts contained in the report is questionable. We believe that taking an unbiased approach to this delicate issue on the basis of objective and reliable information is the key to promoting confidence in the activities undertaken in this respect.

We disagree with the broad manner in which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has interpreted her mandate. We would draw attention in particular to the fact that the issue under consideration today is conflict-related sexual violence. Unilateral changes in the scope of an issue dealt with by a special United Nations mechanism established as a result of intergovernmental processes and enshrined in Security Council resolutions are inadmissible and could have an adverse impact on our ability to resolve the issue of sexual violence.

Accordingly, we call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in carrying out her activities, to strictly comply with her mandate, according priority to those situations on the agenda of the Security Council, where sexual violence is one of the basic issues in the framework of the protection of civilians. With respect to the need to comply with the mandate of the Team of Experts, established by resolution 1888 (2009), we see similar requirements. The Team provides assistance to host countries on strengthening the rule of law in situations of particular concern. In that vein, we are puzzled by the fact that the Secretary-General's report contains an arbitrary interpretation of the mandate that sets out the basic task of the Team of Experts as monitoring situations of sexual violence in conflict worldwide, as well as developing country dossiers on the basis of information received. I wish to underscore that what I have just said in no way detracts from the success and efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Team of Experts in the framework of their mandates.

We are not convinced of the advisability of establishing a special mechanism to monitor respect by parties to a conflict for their responsibilities to combat sexual violence. It would seem that strategic leadership should be harmonized and that the effectiveness of existing systems and mechanisms should be enhanced

by improving coordination among them. Indeed, that would be in line with founding Council resolutions and is at the core of the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We continue to believe that the Security Council must address those issues that fall within its purview. The issue of the sexual violence should be considered by the Council exclusively under the agenda item "Women and peace and security" and insofar as it is linked to the maintenance of peace and security.

In conclusion, we express the hope that the observations and proposals put forward by Council members today will serve to further improve the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other United Nations structures and bodies concerned with combating sexual violence in armed conflict within the framework of their mandates.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking Margot Wallström and Hervé Ladsous for their briefings, and Amina Megheirbi for her moving words on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. The United Kingdom welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33). We wholeheartedly support the work and the mandate of Margot Wallström.

I would like to make three points. First, I would like to commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström for the good work that she has done to raise the profile of this issue, including fighting against impunity. We welcome her concerted efforts in tackling this issue, leading to a more coordinated response from the United Nations system, as she set out this morning. United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict has played an important part in implementing the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements. Ms. Wallström has also worked tirelessly to ensure that the voices of non-governmental and civil society organizations are heard.

Secondly, we welcome the efforts towards greater accountability and an end to impunity. The United Nations monitoring and reporting mechanisms provide reliable, objective and evidence-based information on conflict-related sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys. Under resolution 1960 (2010), the Security Council can now hold to account parties credibly suspected of committing acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence. We note that these parties are listed for the first time, and support appropriate action being taken against those responsible for these terrible acts.

It is important that the Council take into account information on conflict-related sexual violence when considering post-conflict situations and other situations of concern. However, conflict-related sexual violence is not confined to countries on the Security Council's agenda, as we see incidents or patterns occur in other settings. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General must be able to address conflict-related sexual violence wherever a pattern or trend exists as an early warning sign of conflict. These crimes must be reported, addressed and punished, and the survivors must be treated with dignity throughout the reporting process.

We recognize the good work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law. It supports Member States in strengthening the rule of law and institutional safeguards against impunity by working with them to improve rule of law processes and ensuring that those who commit sexual violence are brought to justice. It is not until impunity has been combated and the perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence are brought to account that justice will have been done. All parties to conflict must learn that it is the perpetrator, and not the survivor, who will pay the price.

Finally, we welcome the development of a framework of early warning signs specific to conflict-related sexual violence, as well as the ambition to integrate this analysis into existing and emerging early warning and prevention systems. Early warning and prevention systems are vital tools in both preventing and in tackling conflict-related sexual violence.

Rape is increasingly used as a tactic of war, and the Security Council should be united in condemnation of it and steadfast in support of the crucial work of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The adoption of resolution 1960 (2010), the appointment of Ms. Wallström, the establishment of her good offices alongside the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the work of women protection advisors all contribute to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual

violence, and thereby to international peace and stability.

We firmly believe that the Council needs to sustain and build on this work. For that reason, the United Kingdom is disappointed that the Council has not yet been able to agree a presidential statement condemning conflict-related sexual violence. It sends a depressing message to the world at large, and in particular to victims and survivors, that on the occasion of this debate the Council has not yet been able to agree a public statement on impunity, on prevention and early warning, on follow-up to resolution 1960 (2010) over the past year, and, crucially, on the excellent work of Ms. Wallström.

We trust that intensive and urgent efforts will continue among Council members to agree a public position on these important issues, and that all delegations will demonstrate the necessary commitment, sensitivity and vision to make such a statement possible. The United Kingdom will certainly be active in such efforts.

Finally, we have noticed a disturbing trend recently of certain members of the Security Council arguing that they do not feel bound by resolutions adopted when they were not on the Council. Security Council resolutions are, of course, legally binding on all States Members of the United Nations, and no Member State can distance itself from resolutions or undermine their implementation, whether or not they were present on the Council when those resolutions were adopted.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Togolese presidency for convening this important open debate on women and peace and security. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström; the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous; and Ms. Amina Megheirbi for their statements.

Civilians are entitled in all circumstances to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They are to be at all times humanely treated and protected, especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof.

The reality, however, is different. Indeed, a defining feature of most, if not all, conflicts is still the failure of parties to respect and ensure respect for their obligations to protect civilians. Civilians continue to suffer from inadequate protection in situations of armed conflict, including discriminatory treatment, torture, sexual violence, extrajudicial executions, mass population displacements and ethnic cleansing. In many situations of armed conflict, sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war to strike terror and to force civilians to leave their native lands.

Azerbaijan strongly condemns all acts of violence committed against women and girls in situations of armed conflict. It is imperative that all parties to armed conflict strictly abide by their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

Azerbaijan's interest in the issue under consideration is obvious and stems from its efforts to contribute to achieving sustainable peace and development and its practical experience of addressing the impact of armed conflict on civilians, including women and children.

In three days, we will commemorate the twentieth anniversary of atrocious crimes committed against the Azerbaijani civilians of the town of Khojaly, where during one night hundreds of civilians were killed only because they were Azerbaijanis. Not even women and children were spared by the invading troops. In its resolutions adopted in 1993 in response to the occupation of Azerbaijani territories, the Security Council referred specifically to violations of international humanitarian law and attacks on civilians. We are confident that consistent measures being taken at the national level, as well as the existing international legal framework, will serve to bring to justice those responsible for crimes in Khojaly and other grave offences committed during the occupation of Azerbaijan's territories. It is incontrovertible today that no official or political status cloaks the person concerned with immunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

The adoption by the Security Council of the landmark resolution 1325 (2001) was an important milestone that took up the issue of women and peace and security as a separate thematic issue and brought international visibility to the plight of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. The subsequent Council resolutions, presidential statements and other relevant

documents have contributed to developing a solid framework and raising awareness of the impact that sexual violence has on victims' families and societies.

The heightened vulnerability of civilians in wartime — in particular forcibly displaced persons, refugees, women and children — brings an element of urgency, dedication and strong commitment to our protection efforts, which must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches and preferences. Azerbaijan notes the role that the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict must play in that regard.

Among the pressing issues requiring urgent action and attention is that of women taken hostage and reported missing in connection with armed conflict. We are continuing our efforts to address that disturbing phenomenon, including through the relevant biennial resolution of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, of which Azerbaijan is a main sponsor. In that regard, I would like to recall that, inter alia, at its fifty-fourth session, the Commission called for the immediate release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts, including by strengthening international cooperation to that end.

More resolute and targeted measures are required to end impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, including those committed against women in situations of armed conflict. Combating impunity is important not only for the purposes of prosecuting such crimes and bringing those responsible to justice, but also for ensuring sustainable peace, truth and reconciliation.

Mr. Berger (Germany): I would like to thank Togo, as the holder of the presidency of the Security Council, for organizing today's open debate on this important issue. My thanks also go to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative Margot Wallström, Ms. Amina Megheirbi and Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for their insightful briefings and statements.

The issue on our agenda today is one of the most abhorrent, yet still all too often concealed and underreported, of crimes. In a number of armed conflicts sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, thus not only destroying its victims but traumatizing societies at large. Widespread and systematic sexual violence ranks among the grave breaches of international law, as reflected in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and in the 1949 Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocols.

The Security Council has recognized the threat of conflict-related sexual violence to peace and security. Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) have been historic responses to a heinous reality. However, the disturbing situation on the ground, reflected in the recent report (S/2011/33) of the Secretary-General and in today's briefings, underlines the strong imperative to keep up the fight.

Germany very much welcomes the setting up of the new monitoring and reporting mechanism and commends Special Representative Wallström and all United Nations and civil society organizations working on this issue, for their indispensable work. We hope that the women protection advisers will be deployed shortly. Prevention is an important aspect of the Special Representative's mandate. The Security Council needs to be properly informed about all possible threats to peace and security.

What more can the Security Council, United Nations organizations and Member States do? First, our key goal should be prevention, and not mere reaction. To facilitate such an approach, exact and reliable data and early warning mechanisms — as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report — are crucial. Awareness-raising and training, especially for peacekeepers and police officers, should also be high on our agenda. Whenever a peacekeeping mandate is renewed, the Council needs to make sure that it also contains provisions to monitor sexual violence.

Small arms are another aspect that is often overlooked when discussing the prevention of violence, but one that was mentioned today by the Special Representative. There is some evidence that, especially after an armed conflict, the ready availability of small arms increases the threat of their use, especially against women and children.

Secondly, we must accelerate our fight against impunity. Perpetrators have to be brought to justice. Bearing in mind the main responsibility of States to investigate and prosecute, the Security Council also has a role to play. We therefore welcome the inclusion in the Secretary-General's report, for the first time, of an annex listing parties that are credibly suspected of patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Council's agenda.

Naming and shaming is not an end in itself, but should serve as a basis for targeted measures leading to the end of those terrible crimes. The International Criminal Court and international monitoring mechanisms have also done important work in that regard, and should be further strengthened.

Thirdly, we need greater resolve on ensuring the participation of women at all stages of peace processes. As an example, the issue of sexual violence has not yet figured in most ceasefire or peace agreements. The Department for Political Affairs has developed an interesting new tool to start closing that gap, namely, new mediation guidelines that take into account the issue of sexual violence. The guidelines, which of course cover other aspects as well, will be presented on 9 March at the German Mission. It is my pleasure to invite everyone to attend that event.

Fourthly, reparation schemes and funding frameworks should be guided by a survivor-focused approach. Both physical and mental scars have to be treated in order to allow survivors to once again actively participate in their societies. We commend the valuable work done by United Nations organizations, especially the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, which Germany actively supports, as well as the newly created team of experts that advises Member States, upon their request, to combat sexual violence in or after conflict.

Let me conclude by stressing that we cannot separate the challenge of sexual violence from the broader security issues on the agenda of the Council. We need the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue her important work. Germany will actively support her in her endeavour.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for having convened this debate. The very large number of delegations that have expressed a desire to speak today clearly shows that this issue is at the heart of our concerns. I should also like very much to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Mr. Ladsous for their briefings, as well as Ms. Amina Megheirbi for her very moving statement.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me start by commending Ms. Margo Wallström for her excellent work over the past two years and her efforts to spread a clear message that sexual violence is simply not tolerable and that there is no real security without women's security.

The report (S/2012/33) before us today gives a clear and comprehensive idea of the intensive work that has been carried out worldwide by the Special Representative in her advocacy for the fight against conflict-related sexual violence, in field visits, in engaging with national and non-governmental bodies and authorities and in coordinating within the United Nations system. It provides us with important information on the implementation of the resolutions passed by this Council regarding monitoring and reporting arrangements aimed at collecting more consistent information on conflict-related sexual violence, but also regarding the establishment of a team of experts on the rule of law to assist national authorities to reinforce traditional systems weakened by conflict.

Moreover, the report provides us with very useful information on specific situations, in accordance with resolution 1888 (2009) — information about incidents, but also about challenges and best practices adopted at the national level. It also contains very concrete recommendations, which we welcome.

We must recognize that much has been achieved, and we are confident that the Special Representative will continue to carry out her mandate in the same committed and professional manner.

The Security Council has recognized that the protection of women is a critical priority for peace and security. Resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) have clearly established the fight against sexual violence in the agenda of this Council. The Council has created the necessary tools for obtaining reliable and accurate information on sexual violence. A common definition of sexual violence and common methodologies for data collection through monitoring and recording activities are now used throughout the system.

The Council has been quite successful in discharging its responsibilities, but it still needs to reinforce its effectiveness. For instance, we need to make full use of existing tools, mainly ensuring deployment of women's protection advisers in relevant peacekeeping operations, which will strengthen the prevention of and the response to sexual violence. We hope that the challenges that have delayed the

deployment of these advisers will be overcome, since their deployment in specific missions has already been requested by this Council.

Another promising tool at the disposal of Member States is the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. We welcome the technical cooperation that was provided at the request of national authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, the Republic of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

All information contained in the report is relevant for the Security Council in terms of the Charter's mandate for the maintenance of national peace and security. The information that is already collected by the reporting mechanism will improve the Council's access to timely, objective, accurate and reliable information on sexual violence in conflict. The Secretary-General or the Special Representative will be able to brief the Council with reliable information on specific situations that deserve the Council's attention. That reliable information will consequently enable the Council to act, collectively and in an appropriate mode, well before major incidents of widespread sexual violence reinforce threats to peace and security.

Indeed, a Council that is better informed is also in a better position to take effective action. With sufficient information, the Council will be able to take preventive steps in a timely manner. But the Council now will also need to take action with regard to those parties listed in the annex of the Secretary-General's report, which are, and I quote, "credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence" (S/2012/33, para. 118).

The Council has already passed a clear message to assure the perpetuators of sexual violence that the Council adopts sanctions against perpetrators who have been identified or who are credibly suspected of committing sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on its agenda. The Council should be consistent and reinforce that message concerning other individuals in similar circumstances. Impunity is simply not acceptable.

The work carried out by the Special Representative and, ultimately, by this Council during the past few years is making a real difference in many parts of the world, especially for women and girls, but also for men and boys. As we have heard, Governments have recently prosecuted senior officers of their armed forces for crimes of sexual violence, and leaders of parties in armed conflict have been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court. These actions send a powerful signal to the victims of sexual violence that no military or political leader is above the law. This political message needs to be constantly underlined by the United Nations, and by this Council in particular.

Before concluding, let me mention that we regret that we have not yet been able to agree on the presidential statement on this important debate. But we trust that, with the cooperation of all, we will be able to achieve this shortly.

I conclude with a word for the victims and the survivors of sexual violence. They are at the centre of our debates. Let us not forget them and the fact that beyond bringing perpetrators to justice, the international community also needs to afford care and reparation to the victims.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Wallström; the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Ladsous; and Ms. Megheirbi of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their statements.

France associates itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

I should like to reiterate our full support for the work of the Special Representative and to commend the quality of her annual report. We also welcome the work done by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The effective implementation of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security is a priority for France, which worked actively for their adoption. It also worked to strengthen attention to this issue within the European Union. At the national level, at the end of 2010 France adopted an action plan for the implementation of the resolutions on women, peace and security.

We welcome the progress described in the report of the Special Representative regarding the establishment of institutional mechanisms to implement resolutions adopted by the Security Council. I point

particularly to the progressive implementation of monitoring, analysis and communication arrangements, which will make it possible to gather information on sexual violence. This is essential for the Council to be properly informed.

However, as Ms. Wallström emphasized, the important issue is that of the gap between our initiatives — the mechanisms we establish — and the reality on the ground. Here, the account given by the Secretariat is alarming. Sexual violence remains intolerably high.

In many conflicts today, sexual violence is a weapon used to crush individuals and communities. Therefore, these acts of violence are a destabilizing factor and a threat to peace and security with, as Ms. Wallström emphasized, lasting consequences. By way of example, hundreds of Somali women refugees have been raped, sometimes in front of their husbands. Conflicts, droughts and massive displacements increase the risk of sexual violence against women and girls. In Darfur, the Government of the Sudan has shut down all clinics for the victims of rape. During the past year, more than 625 cases of sexual violence were registered by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sexual violence does not occur only when there is an armed conflict, as the Special Representative pointed out in her report. Situations in which there is political instability, including a climate of violence before and after elections, are particularly favourable for the commission of those crimes. Thus in Syria, the Syrian armed forces and security forces have resorted to sexual torture of prisoners, including children and adolescents.

Sexual violence is not inevitable.

Given the magnitude of the challenges facing the United Nations, France fully supports the mandate of the Special Representative. Resolution 1960 (2010), adopted in December 2010, marked a political commitment to use all the means available to the Security Council to ensure that sexual violence is prevented. It is up to us today to do our utmost to ensure that that resolution is implemented. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations mentioned that what is important today here is the swift deployment of women's protection officers in United Nations missions.

We also welcome the establishment of a list of parties, annexed to the report of the Special Representative, pursuant to resolution 1960 (2010). This list should make it possible to improve communication of information on troubling situations.

It is indeed a decisive step forward in combating impunity for the perpetrators of sexual violence, another imperative in our combat against this scourge. The perpetrators of such violence must be brought to justice and sentenced with all due severity. The Council has a crucial role to play in that regard, both by adopting targeted measures against perpetrators of gender-based violence in the context of the relevant sanctions committees and through its ability to refer situations to the International Criminal Court.

Lastly, it is essential to pursue our efforts to implement a zero-tolerance policy in peacekeeping operations. The United Nations system and Member States must bear their responsibilities in that regard. We should set an example.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): Spawned by misanthropism, sexual or gender-based violence in any form and in any society is reprehensible. Such crimes assume a more sinister dimension when employed as tactics of war and tools of humiliation during armed conflicts. All parties to a conflict have the moral and legal responsibility to ensure due protection of all vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly and the disabled.

Pakistan welcomes this opportunity to have an open and frank discussion on the important topic of sexual violence in armed conflict. We have listened carefully to the remarks made by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and to Ms. Megheirbi.

Pakistan's commitment to the United Nations agenda of peace and security needs no elaboration. For more than half a century, Pakistanis have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations in challenging circumstances. We have noted the Security Council's enhanced emphasis on addressing violations of the human rights of children and women through new mechanisms, such as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Employed properly and in cooperation with concerned States and

other relevant actors, such tools have the potential for good.

We are supportive of the work that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is doing, and would like to encourage her to continue to focus on the core of her mandate, that is, situations of armed conflict or occupation. Having carefully read the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/33), we have some questions and comments on its specifics.

Ideas such as the inclusion of elections, political strife or civil unrest under "other situations" go beyond the mandate of the Security Council. They run counter to paragraph 8 of resolution 1960 (2010), which clearly confines the whole debate to the implementation of resolution 1888 (2009), that is, situations of armed conflict. That is what the report should focus on, not situations that are neither armed conflict nor post-conflict or that threaten international peace and security. It is a matter of concern that some members of the Council, while arguing for a binding nature of Security Council resolutions, paradoxically condone deviations from mandates authorized by those very resolutions. The report should also not deviate from the established notion of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict

As paragraphs 1 and 3 of resolution 1960 (2010) affirm, the mandate of taking action against specific parties is restricted to those situations that are on the agenda of the Security Council. However, in paragraph 116 of the report, the Secretary-General recommends that the Security Council take specific actions, including the use of targeted measures by sanctions committees, against all parties named in the report, instead of those mentioned in the annex. We would appreciate clarification of that anomaly.

The report also mentions the development of a framework for early warning indicators specific to conflict-related sexual violence, with the aim of integrating the analyses yielded by the framework into existing and emerging early warning and prevention systems to facilitate a rapid response. It should be ensured that such a mechanism works strictly within the mandate and under the guidance of the Security Council to obviate politicization.

Let me conclude by saying that, our questions notwithstanding, Pakistan attaches the highest importance to and supports this important mandate. We would like to stress the need to strengthen the rule of law through a focus on national judicial systems, better training for peacekeeping troops and local police forces, and the increased participation of women in all peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes to help end sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. We are also supportive of the recommendations made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the need to take steps for the legal, medical and psychological rehabilitation of the victims of sexual violence, as well as efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity for perpetrators.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my thanks for the important briefings and presentations to the Council by Ms. Margot Wallström, Mr. Hervé Ladsous and Ms. Amina Megheirbi. I wish, in particular, to express Colombia's appreciation for the dedication and work of Ms. Wallström and for the progress in implementing the provisions of resolution 1960 (2010), which seek to ensure prompt, precise, reliable and objective data collection on sexual violence in conflicts.

With regard to the body of the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence that we are considering today (S/2012/33), I would like to draw attention to the definition of the task used throughout it. On the one hand, throughout the report, the expression "conflict-related sexual violence" is used. That is different from that used by the Council in all its previous resolutions and statements, namely, "sexual violence in armed conflict". On the other hand, in resolution 1960 (2010), when the Council requested the Secretary-General to deal with conflict-related situations, such as post-conflict situations or other situations relevant to the implementation of resolution 1888 (2009), it did so solely and exclusively to enable data collection by means of the monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The report therefore reflects the fact that not only is the precise concept of sexual violence in armed conflict being abandoned, but it would also seem that the arrangement can now be applied to the broader concept of incidents or standards of behaviour occurring in other situations that are cause for concern. In our view, that is not covered by resolution 1960 (2010).

Regarding the recommendations contained in the report, Colombia understands that by urging the

Council to increase pressure on perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence, including the individuals and parties named in the report, the Secretary-General is referring to those named in the report's annex, that is to say, the situations being considered by the Council and the sanctions committees set up with regard to such situations, which have adopted clear and precise criteria and procedures. We must not lose sight of the fact that each situation is specific, as are the elements of each mandate issued by the Council.

My delegation reiterates its position with regard to the possible establishment of dialogue with parties to conflict for commitments to prevent sexual violence and hold perpetrators accountable in that the establishment of such dialogue must observe national laws and policies. If a State, as in the case of Colombia, has a policy whereby any dialogue between the United Nations and illegal armed groups operating in the country must take place with the prior explicit authorization of the Government, that decision must be respected.

Colombia attaches the greatest importance to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of sexual violence in armed conflicts. As a result, we are resolutely determined to address this complex series of problems. Our national authorities as a whole are taking action to foster a culture of zero tolerance for violations of human rights, zero tolerance for violence against women and, in particular, zero tolerance for sexual violence. Colombia has legislation ensuring women a life free of any sort of violence in both the public and private spheres and an institutional structure capable of implementing such measures.

Colombia's Law No. 1448 of 2011, on care, assistance and full reparation to the victims of internal armed conflict — as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report — sets out different measures and guarantees of non-recurrence for women and girls who are victims of sexual violence. This is a decisive step forward by the State to deal with these problems in a coordinated and consistent fashion.

With regard to the defence sector, many administrative provisions have been adopted aimed at preventing and punishing abuse, such as Ministry of Defence Directive No. 11 of 2010, which is aimed at reasserting compliance by armed forces with regard to their obligation to prevent all forms of violence against women and children, specifically violent sexual acts, as well as Directive No. 7 of March 2011, on combating impunity.

In order to strengthen the measures adopted in those instruments, coordinated work is being done with the United Nations, the High Adviser for Women's Equality and other State bodies in order to define additional measures of prevention in accordance with experience gained on the ground and international standards.

The establishment of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements for conflict-related sexual violence must ensure that on the basis of accurate, objective and verifiable information, measures may be adopted to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and provide effective responses to help its victims. Similarly, recognizing the primary responsibility of the State to protect its people, the information obtained must contribute to the adoption of broad national policies and strategies against sexual violence, including prevention and care and recognition of victims.

In that regard, it is imperative to help States with the development and implementation of early-warning mechanisms and procedures that facilitate the reporting, registering and verification of information. To the same end, the various United Nations bodies must continue to strengthen coordination, reducing the duplication of effort and ensuring a consistent approach in the field in order to help the Council in its consideration of all appropriate measures.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Togo for convening this open debate. I welcome the presence of His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Togo to preside over this meeting. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Ladsous and Ms. Amina Megheirbi for their briefings and statements.

China condemns all violence against women in armed conflicts, including sexual violence. We urge all parties to conflict or intervening parties to abide by international humanitarian law and other relevant international law. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the following five points.

First, to avoid and lessen the harm suffered by women in armed conflicts, we should first of all

prevent wars and reduce the number of conflicts. The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. To safeguard the rights and interests of women, the Council should actively engage in preventive diplomacy and promote the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, including dialogue and consultations. The mandates of the Council's resolutions should be comprehensively and strictly implemented. They must not be abused and, even less so, exceeded. Actions to provide protection for civilians should pay particular attention to avoiding further casualties among women and children.

Secondly, Governments bear the main responsibility for protecting women and combating sexual violence, as well as for implementing resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and the relevant presidential statements. While the international community can provide constructive assistance, external support must comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and fully respect the sovereignty of the countries concerned.

Thirdly, it is necessary to strengthen the participation of women in all stages of the peace process, pay attention to their status and roles, and further tap their potential. China supports women in playing a greater role in preventing and settling conflicts and in rehabilitation and reconstruction. China supports the United Nations in appointing more female senior officials, special representatives of the Secretary-General and special envoys, and especially in increasing female representation from the developing countries.

Fourthly, the issue of women is that of development. In order to fundamentally solve various problems, including sexual violence, attention should be paid to promoting economic and social development, eradicating the root causes of conflicts and achieving the comprehensive development of women. The United Nations should actively promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, increase support and assistance to developing countries and, in particular, pay greater attention to the reconstruction and development of post-conflict countries.

Fifthly, in addressing questions related to women, peace and security, including sexual violence, there should be a division of labour among the relevant United Nations organs, which should collaborate with each other. In accordance with its Charter mandate, the Security Council should concern itself with situations that constitute a threat to international peace and security. At the same time, full play should be given to the role of other United Nations organs and bodies, such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and UN-Women, which should endeavour to generate synergy.

We hope that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will work strictly in accordance with the mandate of the Security Council and play a constructive role in appropriately addressing the problem of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful to the Togolese presidency for convening this open debate on sexual violence in armed conflict, as well as to Ms. Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict, for her presentation of the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/33), which informs us in a more detailed manner regarding the situation on the ground on this subject. We are also grateful for the interventions by Mr. Hervé Ladsous and Ms. Amina Megheirbi.

We recognize that the mandate to combat sexual violence in situations of conflict is a very complex one. When such crimes are perpetrated against women and girls in a massive and systematic way by armed groups, they have the aim, among other aspects, of punishing, humiliating and destroying the fabric of society. Moreover, such crimes often include deeply rooted discriminatory practices, sheltered by a culture of impunity. Among many other aspects, they constitute grotesque violations of human rights, with grave consequences for individuals, families and societies.

Over the past three years the Security Council has been working to strengthen collective measures to combat sexual violence in armed conflicts. The adoption of resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) underscored the Council's commitment to fight the utterly unacceptable violence and terror that women suffer because of sexual violence during armed conflicts. The work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has been crucial to this effort.

We applaud some of the conceptual advances contained in the Secretary-General's report in proposing a more detailed characterization of the scope of conflict-related sexual violence, based on analysis of cases and trends of some twenty situations on the ground. That offers better elements for preventive measures and the eventual use of early warning systems and for improving access to services for victims — or, to use the term of the report, survivors — of this scourge.

We are aware of the diverse consequences of armed conflicts, which increase the likelihood of sexual violence. It cannot be denied that factors such as the fear of reprisals, insecurity, social stigma and the lack of prompt services for victims often prevent such crimes from being reported. Moreover, we must fight the perception that it is futile to report them. We must work to strengthen the administration of justice, both civilian and military, so that the perpetrators and those responsible are brought to justice. It is imperative to obtain firm commitments to prohibit sexual violence on the part of the high-ranking commanders of armed forces, and the armed groups, and to adopt codes of conduct that prohibit sexual violence.

We strongly agree with the specific recommendations in the Secretary-General's report. We must increase the pressure against those responsible for acts of sexual violence in conflicts. In that regard, we commend the list of parties and even of individuals that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for systematic rape and other forms of sexual violence during armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations.

We also believe that the Council should systematically consider sexual violence in armed conflicts when authorizing or renewing mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions. Moreover, we should guarantee the participation of women in the solution and prevention of conflicts. Rehabilitation and reconstruction are important parts of the efforts for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Guatemala supports the idea that women should play a greater role in the good offices work and in mediating controversies. We encourage the Secretary-General to appoint more qualified women as special representatives and special envoys.

We are concerned by the delay in the deployment of women's protection advisers in peacekeeping operations. Such advisers were approved in resolution 1888 (2009). We hope that in future their deployment can be expedited so as to effectively comply with the mandate of that resolution.

Finally, we reiterate our support for the United Nations campaign against sexual violence in conflicts and for the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy with regard to personnel of peacekeeping missions. We also encourage Ms. Wallström to continue her visits to the field, and we commend her five recent visits and the agreements reached with the Governments. We trust that in this task she will engage with regional bodies to coordinate actions at the highest possible level.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Margot Wallström and to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, for their briefings this morning. Our delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/33) and the comments made on behalf of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), specifically the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and security.

South Africa attaches great significance to the subject matter under consideration, and we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, the Special Representative and the entire United Nations team that continues to work hard to ensure that this scourge is completely eradicated. We would like to commend the excellent job done by the United Nations and the Special Representative to highlight the challenges of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas. Africa continues to bear the brunt of this evil, given its high share of the number of conflict areas. This scourge has to be completely eradicated sooner than later.

South Africa remains deeply concerned about the continuing trends of sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, in particular the deliberate targeting of civilians, especially children. It is a fact that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the scourge of violence. Over the centuries, women have formed the core of civilization and human advancement. On our continent and in South Africa, women have participated in the gallant struggles against colonialism and oppression as equals, shoulder to shoulder with men, in the struggle for justice, emancipation and equality.

It is therefore a travesty that women are still today subjected to the most degrading and dehumanizing acts, in spite of their violent role in history. We should therefore spare no effort to comprehensively resolve all the outstanding conflicts across the globe in general and on our continent in particular. Those conflicts continue to be a fertile ground for sexual violence, and rape in particular, which is used as a weapon of war.

We have taken note of the fact that the Secretary-General's report for the past year was prepared and compiled after a broad and extensive consultation with the 13-entity network — a fact greatly appreciated by my delegation, given that it has enriched the report by making it one informed by the conditions and experiences on the ground. No doubt it is one of the most comprehensive reports ever prepared on this matter, and it represents to a large extent the great deal of progress in dealing with this scourge. We are particularly pleased that United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, as well as country teams, were primary sources of information for the report. For South Africa that is crucial, because the report is informed by the experiences of people who are at the cold phase.

The Council has done an outstanding job over the past few years to comprehensively address the challenge of conflict-related sexual violence by adopting landmark resolutions aimed at eradicating it. South Africa welcomes the progress that has been made so far in the preparations of the terms of reference for women protection advisers, and we look forward to their early deployment. We are mindful of the limitations that continue to pose a challenge to the reporting of incidents of sexual violence in conflict-stricken areas.

It is our hope that the countries mentioned in the report will do everything in their power to address all the challenges identified, including bringing the perpetrators to justice and reparations for the victims. South Africa is concerned that African countries continue to constitute the majority of countries where there is an increasing prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence. We are appalled that the incidents of rape and gang rape increased in the recent conflict that struck Côte d'Ivoire. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rape, mass rapes and other sexual violence continue unabated in North and South Kivu. That is a matter of great concern to South Africa.

We welcome and fully support the establishment by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) of prosecution support cells to boost the capacity of the Congolese justice system in the investigation of war crimes, crimes against humanity and sexual violence. We hope that all those initiatives will help to bring all the perpetrators to justice and end the culture of impunity.

We welcome the commitments that were made by the Governments of countries of concern during the visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in relation to addressing impunity for sexual crimes and the training of security personnel. We appreciate the work done by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, especially its great work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and South Sudan.

In the same vein, and equally important, are the predeployment training modules that UN-Women and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have developed. We welcome the modules that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has developed on the protection of civilians and sexual violence with the African Union partners, under the auspices of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. We are of the view that the streamlining of conflict-related sexual violence across all peacekeeping training will go a long way in the efforts to comprehensively address and eradicate that evil. We would like to encourage all United Nations agencies and departments to continue to work together in an integrated and coordinated manner to effectively implement such training. We hope that we will soon see the fruits of those concerted efforts.

We are pleased with the development of a framework of early warning signs specific to conflict-related sexual violence by UN-Women, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the broader United Nations system. That will assist a great deal towards preventing those heinous crimes. We equally appreciate the work of the Department of Political Affairs in producing the United Nations guidelines for mediators on addressing conflict-related sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements. South Africa supports the inclusion of provisions dealing with conflict-related sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements, which must have a

direct linkage with the increasing role of women in conflict resolution and management.

South Africa is mindful of the fact that, if all those efforts and initiatives are to succeed, a great deal of resources and funds are required. The international community and the United Nations must do all they can to ensure that resources do not stand in the way of the implementation of all the strategies, initiatives and efforts for the complete eradication of conflict-related sexual violence. We support the call contained in the 2010 report on women's participation in peacebuilding (S/2010/466) for the allocation of at least 15 per cent of United Nations-managed funds for post-conflict peacebuilding projects to advance gender equality, to empower women and to address women's specific needs in peacebuilding contexts, which includes the prevention of and response to sexual violence.

South Africa supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General that the Security Council increase pressure on the perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence, that it utilize all means at its disposal, and that, in this matter, it fully support the use of referrals to the International Criminal Court. For us, there is no gainsaying the fact that the International Criminal Court has strengthened the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern against women and girls. We continue to stand ready to work with other members of the Council and the United Nations in general to enhance efforts against impunity and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. The perpetrators of these evil acts should no longer be allowed to remain in uniform, roam the streets, sit at negotiating tables, continue to occupy positions of authority or command armed forces.

We fully concur with the recommendation that the Security Council should systematically reflect conflict-related sexual violence in the authorization and renewal of peacekeeping mandates and the renewal of special political missions. In that respect, South Africa has always supported the call for the deployment of women protection advisers to peacekeeping and political missions in order to coordinate the implementation of conflict-related sexual violence.

For our part, South Africa continues to increase the number of women deployed in United Nations peacekeeping missions. About 45 per cent of the troops we contribute to the United Nations are women, and 10 per cent of them have played leadership and commanding roles. We will continue to do our part and to contribute to international efforts to address the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence.

In conclusion, we support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in line with the mandate, and we want to assure her of our continued support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I will now address the Council in my capacity as the representative of Togo.

I would like first to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/33) on conflict-related sexual violence. I would also like to thank Ms. Margot Wallström for her praiseworthy work on the issue and Mr. Hervé Ladsous for the useful efforts that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) continues to make in this sphere. I would further like to thank to the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for her organization's cutting-edge work to combat violence against women and girls.

United Nations efforts to eradicate sexual violence in armed conflict deserve recognition, as they make an important contribution to restoring peace and security in countries in conflict and to the essential process of reconciliation. Indeed, the suffering inflicted on women and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict situations remains a source of serious concern insofar as it undermines the process of reconciliation. Sexual violence is manifested in rape, sexual slavery, prostitution, pregnancy, forced sterilization and any other form of sexual violence of comparable seriousness. Such acts, committed in conflict or post-conflict situations or in other crisis situations, constitute serious violations of human rights and are all the more deplorable for their impact on people who are already vulnerable.

My country welcomed the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which defines the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding. The national action plans that Member States are called upon to draw up pursuant to that resolution seem to be the most effective means for attaining the goals of the resolution.

In that spirit, Togo has drafted an action plan to combat all forms of violence against women. My country has established nationwide support centres for women victims of violence. For 10 years now, my country has also participated in 16 days of campaigning organized from 25 November to 10 December every year. As a troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Togo has also created a predeployment centre where military and police personnel in training are made aware of the strict prohibition of all forms of sexual violence.

In addition to those measures, which are aimed at preventing violence against women in conflict, my country reiterates the urgent need to put an end to impunity if we are to ensure that every society in the thrall of conflict, wherever it may be, draws lessons from the atrocities committed against civilians and prevents such atrocities from being repeated. In that regard, Togo welcomes the steps taken by the Secretary-General to ensure that the zero-tolerance policy regarding exploitation and sexual violence in United Nations peacekeeping operations, in conformity with paragraph 7 of resolution 1820 (2008), does not remain an empty term.

My country also supports the main initiatives launched by the United Nations to combat sexual violence in times of conflict, as set out in the report. These efforts include scenario-based predeployment training modules on preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence; analysis of early warning signs of sexual violence in times of conflict, with the aim of integrating that analysis into existing and emerging early warning and prevention systems to facilitate a rapid response; and addressing conflict-related sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements.

To combat and especially to deter the perpetration of such acts, Togo believes that the countries concerned must build an arsenal of justice, such as national or hybrid criminal courts and tribunals, turning, if necessary to the International Criminal Court, with scrupulous respect for the principle of complementarity, which maintains the primacy of national jurisdictions.

My country also believes that the affected countries could resort to extrajudicial mechanisms and methods of reconciliation, that is, to truth, justice and reconciliation commissions and roundtables. These mechanisms can help not only to solidify the principle of the individual responsibility of perpetrators of serious crimes, but also to promote peace, truth, reconciliation and the rights of victims.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Togo's support for the presidential statement to be adopted at the conclusion of this debate. My country wishes to renew its thanks to the United States delegation for its work in that regard.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I remind speakers that they are asked to limit their statements to a maximum of four minutes so that the Council may complete its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs of Belgium.

Mr. Reynders (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for the report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33). I also wish to thank Ms. Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and her team of experts. It is impossible to remain indifferent in reading the report, for sexual violence in many societies is still a common practice, often invisible and too rarely prosecuted.

Belgium has always been a strong defender of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. It formally promises to remain so.

Belgium associates itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to address three subjects.

First is the mandate of the Special Representative, which for Belgium is very clear. It allows the Security Council to focus on sexual violence not only in classic conflict situations but also in post-conflict situations or other serious situations, such as political unrest. The Council already regularly takes up such issues in various types of situations. I welcome the reference in the report to instances of sexual violence in situations of unrest and instability, particularly in Egypt and Syria. To reduce the mandate

solely to cases of sexual violence in conflict situations would be tantamount to restricting the role of the United Nations in defending individuals and societies that suffer from this terrible scourge. We cannot retreat from the detailed mandate set out in resolution 1960 (2010).

Furthermore, while sexual violence mainly affects women and girls, the Secretary-General's report makes very clear that the situation of men, especially those in custody, as well as children born as a result of rape, deserves greater attention from us. Rather than seeking to lock the mandate into too limited an area of action, we should develop a comprehensive approach to protecting civilians.

My second comment concerns some particular recommendations in the report, first, that concerning initiatives and modalities relating to security sector reform. It is indeed our duty to ensure that those who perpetrate, command or condone sexual violence are excluded from all branches of government, including the armed forces and police. In addition, United Nations mediators and officials also must ensure that sexual violence is included in the definition of conduct prohibited by ceasefire and peace agreements. Indeed, Belgium calls particularly for an increase in the number of women serving as mediators and special envoys.

Finally, the third recommendation that I wish to underline concerns prevention, which is often more effective than reparation. That is why Belgium supports any initiative aimed at adopting early warning systems that could detect risks of imminent sexual violence in regions affected by conflict.

My third and final comment relates to situations in some particular countries. The Special Representative has visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo several times to discuss with top Government officials the issue of sexual violence, often committed by military personnel. Belgium was among the first to provide financial support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo's national strategy to combat sexual violence. We also provided financial support to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for military judges to assist with the prosecution of soldiers accused of sexual violence in the eastern part of the country. Belgium intends to remain engaged in this project, in consultation with the Special Representative and with national authorities.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Central African Republic configuration, Belgium attributes particular importance to the issue of sexual violence in that country. The Central African Republic is on the priority list for action by the Special Representative. The problem of violence against women and children is discussed during each Commission field visit, and regular contact on the subject is maintained with the Office of the Special Representative.

The reports on the situations in Libya, Egypt and Syria are particularly relevant in the context of the so-called Arab Spring. The issue of sexual violence in countries in transition should not be ignored. I am deeply concerned at reports by the United Nations commission of inquiry to the effect that Syrian armed forces and security personnel have used sexual torture against detainees in various detention centers of the intelligence and political security services. I trust we shall have an opportunity to speak of that tomorrow, in the framework of the meeting of the friends of Syria in Tunis.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the collective responsibility for the fight against sexual violence. The Security Council must act on this report, in particular by transmitting to the sanctions committees the list of parties responsible for sexual violence, which is annexed to the report, for effective follow-up. The development of that list is a first, for which I congratulate the Secretary-General.

I sincerely trust that the team of the Special Representative will continue their excellent work. I believe their report is one stage and that there will be more.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. I intend, with the consent of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.